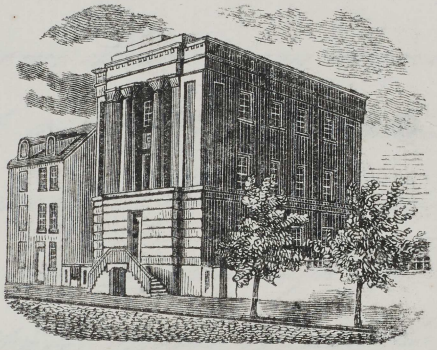
AN ESSAY ON

Animal Magnetism

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE



HOMŒOPATHIC MEDICAL COLLEGE

OF PENNSYLVANIA,

On the Seventeenth day of January, Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-six.

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In studying the history of man, from the time of his creation, to the present period, we will perceive, that change, has ever constituted a universal law of Nature. So distinctly is this made manifest to us, that we know, that every second of time brings about an entire alteration in every thing that exists.— For instance we know that we are moving through the boundless regions of space, more than ten thousand miles, every hour of our existance, for inasmuch as the Earth moves at that rate, we, as a natural consequence must move with it.— and not only does the Earth in itself undergo a constant change, but every thing that is therein, is compelled to follow or obey the same law.

The same law holds good too, where the history

of the human family, is to be taken into consideration, for by investigation we will find that as the world advanced in years, so too did it advance in knowledge, and the attainment of science.— This fact was demonstrated already in the early history of the world.—

But whatever may have been the knowledge of the ancients, and however wise they may have considered themselves, still it may with truth be said, that they knew nothing, if compared with the enlightenment of the present era.—

It is only to the few last centuries, that the world is indebted for the knowledge which it at present enjoys, and more particularly than any, the present century, for many of the great men

to who's intellect we owe discoveries in
Science, Still live and commingle with
the flesh and bone of this Earth.—
But although discoveries have ever been
made and substantiated by facts, which
proved them to be correct and true, yet
it is none the less true, that men
who have made known to the world,
such discoveries, have met with the
vilest opposition, and persecution, stig-
matised and maligned, as though they
were not worthy to be numbered among
Gods creatures, men.—I do not believe
that there is a single instance recorded
in history, where a Scientific discovery
was made known, to the world, no
matter how incalculably valuable
that discovery ultimately proved to be,

but what the discoverer was obliged to undergo the severest and most sarcastic criticism, to say the least of it: many instances are known, where an inventor or discoverer, was actually thrown into prison, as a suspected accomplice of the king of the subterranean abode.— I do not wish to say, that such things happen at the present day,— far from it,— we are becomming too enlightened to be guilty of such things ourselves,— but nevertheless it cannot be denied, that such things have occurred repeatedly, although not in our time, and we have only to thank the general progress of knowledge that we are not guilty of such deeds.— We have grown out of the dark and

superstitious ages of the world, and are rapidly passing into the age, when the Universe shall be resplendent with the light of science art and discovery, and the darkness of ignorence, which once reigned supremely, on the face of this Gods earth shall be totally banished from among us, and in its stead, will be placed knowledge, the key of wisdom, to occupy the throne of mans reason through time and eternity.— True it is, that men have, and do yet, expound to the world, false doctrines as well as true, but we are endowed with common sense, reason and understanding, which have been given to us, by the Creator, to enable us to judge between what is true and what

is false, but nevertheless we ought never to refuse to investigate a thing impartially, no matter how problematical, or ridiculous it may appear at first sight, and moreover, we should never ridicule before we know that we are right, in doing so.— Too often it has been the case, that persons who were too apt to ridicule, a discovery, have turned the laugh upon themselves, for the stupidity which they displaid in not appreciating the efforts of scientific men, whose sole endeavour was to discover some of Nature's hidden truths, for the benefit of mankind in general.— Who would have supposed one hundred years ago, that at the present day, distance would be laughed

at, when the "iron-horse" which is propelled as if by magic, through the regions of space, by that wonderful and most powerful agent, steam — or that the same agent was capable of propelling vessels of the heaviest construction, with a motion, easy as that of the swan, enabling us to navigate the waters of the earth, with a speed, surpassing anything ever before known. But more ridiculous than any would have been the idea, that such a thing, as the magnetic telegraph, should ever come to exist, an agent by which we are enabled to communicate with one an other, thousands of miles apart, and with the velocity of lightening transmit our communications. —

Astonishing as these discoveries would have appeared, and did appear, when first made known to the world, they are at present only talked of, as natural conveniences, indispensibly necessary to the progress of the age.— Now that all these discoveries have been found true by the test of experience, every body of course believes in them, but how was it when they were first made known,— Oh! that was quite a different thing—, every body had a right then to ridicule and hoot as much as he pleased, and say— "the fellow has gone mad,"— "turned crazy"— and many other such beautiful remarks, calculated to do anything, than raise the inventor in the estimation of the people,— but ridicule failed and genius

was bound to triumph over ignorance, as it always will.—

To find out whether a doctrine is true or false, an impartial investigation is necessary, and to do this, let your own sober judgement be brought to bear, and common sense will do the rest.—

We as disciples of Hahnemann, know from experience what it is, to advance a new theory into the world, yet in doing so, we know that we are right. Hence it behooves us, as followers of one whose name we hold in our hearts as a cherished memorial, and specimen of human greatness and mighty intellect, to push forward in spite of all opposition, until the highest pinnacle of our wishes is attained, and the triumphant

progress of homoeopathy, will afford
an other glorious instance, that truth
must, and will prevail.— In view
of this fact, is it not reasonable to
suppose, that what is already established
as a fact, as positive truth, cannot
otherwise than prosper, in this scientific
age.— What I have reference to
here, I have selected as the subject of
my thesis, and present it to the
Faculty of the Homoeopathic Medical
College of Pennsylvania, hoping that
they will make an allowance for
the deficiency in which I have handled
the subject of

Animal Magnetism.

In taking up this subject for discussion,
I cannot otherwise than acknowledge my

inability to do justice to it,- nevertheless I will endeavour to show it up in its true light, and try to the best of my ability to make myself understood, and the subject comprehensible, for it is a science which like all truths is bound to go forward and leave its mark of success, engraven upon the very walls, of the habitations to which it may gain access, and the day is not far distant, when its virtues will be known throughout the entire regions of the inhabitable globe. To the medical profession in particular it will doubtless prove, aye it has already proved to be a valuable auxilery in the curing of disease, and many an invalid, will yet, through its astonishing influence, be enabled to rise from

his couch of pain and suffering, and go forth into the world, cured and freed from his ailments, calling blessings on his head, who, through Divine greatness, has been enabled to make himself so useful to suffering humanity.

It may perhaps be said, that this is rather the language of an enthusiast than of a sound reasoner;- this is not so, and every one who has examined the subject, will coincide with my views, and it is the duty of every homoeopathic physician, to examine it, and convince himself of the truth of mesmeric influence on the animal economy, and moreover, to study it thoroughly, in its applicability, as a

curative agent, and the best manner of applying, and also, in what particular diseases it may be used with the greatest benefit.— All this should claim the attention of the humane practitioner of medicine, for we ought ever to be ready to espouse a discovery, by means of which, we may be enabled, to further our cause towards its perfection:— any thing that will relieve human suffering will be an additional weapon, with which we may brave the storm in combatting against disease.—

The human organism, taken as a whole, is a beautiful illustration of the grandeur and magnificence of the Creators works. The wisdom displaid in its construction is too vast for human comprehension.

and yet how seldom do we think of it. we live on from day to day without even enquiring, how it is, or by what means, it is, that we live,— We know that we are endowed with vitality, and that there are certain processes constantly going on within us, but the real how, why and wherefore of our existance, is in reality a mystery which can not be solved, and it would be useless to spend time and labour in trying to ferret out this problem, for I believe it is entirely beyond the reach of man, to find out what it is, that constitutes life:— and yet we are not certain, but that scientific researches, may yet

succeed in making this matter plain to our senses;- much has already been done by the medical profession in discovering important truths in regard to man, and much may yet be done, and for aught we know, every mystery in relation to our existance, may yet be opened to our view, as clear as daylight.- But as it is useless to talk about what we do not know, and particularly as this does not concern my subject, it will be decidedly more satisfactory to discuss matters of which we have some little knowledge, and by which we may be enabled to gain some little edification, and on the whole, it will be vastly

more agreeable, than to grope in the dark, or try to find a needle in a hay-stack, which, it must be confessed, we would stand very little chance of finding.—

Every organized body is composed or made up of different parts, which we term organs, and these organs have each and every one of them their allotted functions to perform, which they do to a nicety beyond any other thing in nature. It is only when the system becomes impaired by disease, that these functions become in a manner deranged, and their equilibrium for a time destroyed, and when such is the case, all the powers of nature make an effort to reestablish the healthy

actions.—How wonderful and sublime are these arrangements, and how much care should we exercise, in order not to violate the laws of nature, so as to disturb the healthy actions of those functions, by means of which alone we are enabled to enjoy life in a fit and proper manner. For if we are deprived of health, all other earthly goods are valueless. But I might go on in this way expatiating upon the beauties of nature's works, and become deeply engrossed in the same with unbounded admiration, picturing with glowing eloquence the works of Nature and of Nature's God, but at the same time I would loose sight of my subject, and would ultimately find myself at a loss about

what I really wanted to say, and for which purpose I commenced to write. I trust however that I may be excused for my enthusiasm, and perhaps too lengthy deliberations, and frequent deviations from the course, which I had in the first place marked out, and intended to pursue.— That part of the human organism which I will have mostly to do with in my present discourse, will be the nervous system, for it is by means of, and through it only, that the mesmerizer can gain his desired object, and hence it is important, that we should know how, and by what means the various phenomena take place, which mesmerism

claims to produce.- It is by means of the nervous system, that impressions from the external world, are communicated to the mind;- through its medium we are enabled to see, hear, smell, feel, taste, and to perform all the voluntary movements of the body, and this is carried on, apparently with the greatest ease and simplicity, but in order to perform these various functions, it is necessary that the impression should first be conveyed to the mind, which then acts upon the will, and through the will, the voluntary actions are performed:- and as the mind and will have their seats in the brain, the brain must necessarily be the connecting link between mind and matter.

In order to be enabled to give my ideas more fully on this subject, I shall consider the brain as a sort of electric battery, from which spring all the ramifications of nerves like so many telegraphic wires, connecting with each other throughout the entire system, thereby conveying the nervous or electric fluid, which is a necessary accompaniment, dispensing it with wonderful regularity and equality, over the whole of the living body.—
It is by means of this nervous fluid that vitality is made manifest, and also through its medium that the beautiful law of sympathy between different parts and organs

in the body exists:- for instance, we know that if a violent blow be struck upon the head, the sympathy between the brain and stomach will immediately show itself, and vomiting will be the result.- This is caused by the muscles of the stomach, contracting violently, the effect of too great irritation or stimulus, transmitted by sympathy from the brain.- The same thing is true with mental emotion;- if, for instance, a person with a good healthy appetite, sit down at the dinner table, perhaps with the firm intention of doing full justice to his meal, and if at that moment, some unexpected news, be made known to him,

immediately concerning himself, whether it have the tendency to produce excessive grief or joy, it will at once take away his appetite and the craving of his stomach for food, will instantaneously leave him. These are instances, showing that a certain equilibrium of the nervous fluid is necessary to maintain the system in perfect health, and if this equilibrium be destroyed, or in a measure deviated from, abnormal results will as a necessary consequence, manifest themselves, - hence the importance of keeping this equilibrium at a proper normal standard. - Now if sympathy is capable of showing

itself so nicely, and produce such astonishing effects, between different organs in the same body, why should it not be capable of being transmitted from one body to an other? — No well established reason can be brought forth to disprove that such is not the case. If for example, a man of robust habit, and powerful constitution, whose physiognomy presents the very picture of perfect health, grasp the hand of an other man, whose constitution has been weakened by disease, and place his thumb firmly upon the median nerve of the feeble man, he will most assuredly convey from his own system some of the nervous fluid, and transmit it or distribute it through the body of

the sick man, and produce an invigorating effect.- Now how is this explained?- simply in this way- the healthy man has a sufficient quantity of nervous fluid circulating in his body, and is capable of generating it more rapidly than the sick man, and if he brings about a connection between his nerves and the sick man's nerves, the nervous or electric fluid will circulate from his body to the sick man's body until an equilibrium is established between the two, when, for the time being, there can be no further effect produced. and if this experiment is repeated for several times, the effect will be to reestablish the health of the patient.-

This explains the reason why all persons cannot be mesmerized, it is because two persons, having an equal quantity of nervous or electric fluid, cannot produce any effect upon each other, and from this I infer, that mesmerism will prove of incalculable value to the medical profession as a remedy for the cure of disease.- Whether I am right in my supposition, time and investigation will show.-

The modus operandi of bringing a person under mesmeric influence, is very simple, and may be performed in various ways.- It is important however, that the operator should be a perfectly healthy person, and if possible endowed with

a strong mind, and energetic will;- if this is the case, he may bring about the desired effect with greater facility, than if these qualities were not present. The best manner then, of bringing a person under mesmeric influence, is for the operator to seat himself before his subject, grasp his or her hands, one in each of his own, with the palms looking upward, pressing his thumbs upon the median nerve, and direct the person to look him steadfastly in the face, until the eyes begin to feel weary, and then let them be closed,- In this position he should remain for about five or ten minutes, and then make passes from the centre of the

head, downwards over the shoulders along the arms, to the extremities of the fingers, taking care to shake the hands well, every time he does so,— If he continue these passes for a considerable length of time, say fifteen or twenty minutes, he will generally succeed in making an impression, although it may not always be, at the first time a trial is made; a great deal too depends upon what sort of person it is, upon whom the trial is made.— Some persons can be mesmerized in a very few minutes, while others are obliged to resort to the experiment repeatedly, before any effect can be produced.— I myself have had the experiment tried on repeated occasions,

without however producing any effect. Whilst on the other hand, I have seldom found any difficulty in experimenting upon others.—

An other way of operating, is for the mesmerizer, to take both hands of his subject into one of his own, and make passes with the other commencing at the top of the head and bringing his hand down in front of his subject, or over the back,—in this way the effect may sometimes be produced, with greater facility than the other way.—

Mesmeric influence may be considered, as presenting various stages or phenomena.—Thus there is simple

mesmeric sleep, in which the subject is sensible to every thing which is going on around him, and yet is incapable of moving, or opening his eyes. "Insensibility to pain, occurs only, when the mesmeric coma is fully established, and most of the external senses, together with the proper consciousness of external objects, is rendered dormant, and the internal faculty of imagination, is called into activity, without the guidance of true reason."

"Phantasy, or that state in which the mesmerized person takes the mere suggestions of the mind of the operator to be realities."

"Phreno-mesmerism, or the manifestations of the phrenological sentiments and

feelings," which is but an other form of simple immaginative action.—
"Transfer of state and feeling, or that immaginative action which causes the patient to feel what is done, to the mesmerizer, as if it was done to himself."—
"Mental attraction, or apparent magnetic drawing of the person of the patient, even contrary to his own inclinations".—
"Cerebral lucidity, or apparent illumination of the brain," and lastly "Clairvoyance, or inner vision".—Now all these faculties might be taken each into separate consideration, in order to explain the different phenomena, which occur, during these various stages, but as the result would ultimately tend to

one point, - viz, - the cure of disease, for I shall not consider it in any but a medical point of view, it is entirely unnecessary to discourse so fully upon it, as if I wished to treat of it, independent of a medical light. - My object now, is to take the subject into consideration more particularly as a remedial agent for the cure of disease. - Numerous instances are recorded, of persons who were supposed to be dead, and brought to life again under peculiar circumstances. - For instance - Cases are on record, where life was apparently extinct, and the supposed corpse was about to be conveyed to his final resting place, preparations

were made for the funeral,—people assembled in large numbers, in the room where the body laid, and perhaps, when the ceremony of singing a hymn, or saying a prayer, was going on, to the astonishment and surprise of all, the corpse would raise himself up, in his coffin, and stare with wonder, at the concourse of people, as if unable to comprehend, what was going on, and what is most astonishing would get out of his coffin, in perfect health, and life.—Now how is this accounted for?—Why is it that at this particular time, when the room was crouded with living bodies, that the dead should become

alive again.— Simply for this reason— The collection of living beings formed as it were, a large electro-magnetic battery, which had a mighty influence on the inanimate form of the sleeper, and created such a powerful reaction that the palsied form, was again restored to the vigor of perfect health, and all the functions, apparently suspended in death, made to perform their allotted duties, with increased beauty and precision.— Thus showing that it needed but the concentrated power of the combined magnetic forces, generated in the living battery, to produce this wonderful effect, and reestablish that vitality, which had for a time

been lying dormant in the body,-
of the supposed dead.-
Doubtless many a human being has
under similar circumstances, been
buried alive, who had not the good
fortune, to be roused from his
lethargic state, but was doomed
to perish in a most horrible manner
beneath the cold and merciless earth.-
Such cases are known to have occured,
from the fact, that bodies having
been disinterred, for some motive or
other, have been found in a changed
position, from that in which they
had been placed, their bodies convulsed
with faces distorted, and turned
downwards, leaving positive evidence
that they had been buried alive.-

There are yet otherways, by which the effect of reanimation has been brought about, and all in no other way than by mesmeric influence, One is by means of true and devoted love, - instances are recorded where the Spirit was supposed to have already left its earthly tenement, but where the great affection manifested by a doting wife, husband, or some loving friend, in calling upon the prostrated one, with all the intensity of feeling, which only true love, is capable of producing, has had the happy effect of calling the wandering Spirit back to its mortal cavern. - I might cite instances of this kind innumerable, but in order not to

prolong my treatise to an unnecessary extent, I forbear doing so, and will proceed further to give some more specific description, in showing the influence which mesmerism has on the impaired functions of the human system.- The diseases to which the curative influence of mesmerism may be most beneficially applied, are those peculiar to the brain and nervous system,- Neuralgic affections of the head and limbs,- Determination of blood to the brain, producing stupor and giddiness, and sometimes delirium. As also rheumatism in its various forms, neuralgic pain in the back &c. But in treating these diseases, in this way, and in order to facilitate a speedy

cure, it would be advisable, to combine with it, a judicious medical treatment, such as Homoeopathy is only capable of affording, for however beneficial mesmerism may be, it will always be impressed, and the desired end attained with greater facility, if a correct homoeopathic treatment be at the same time instituted. —

In conclusion I would say that the full use of mesmerism, as a curative agent, will not be thoroughly known, until there are better opportunities for its practice, than at present exist, and further, that it, like all other good things, is liable to be misused, inasmuch that it may be resorted to, for attaining immoral and vicious ends, while on the other hand to us, as medical men, it may prove an agent capable of carrying happiness and joy to many a depressed and afflicted form, — "So mote it be" —